

FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS INC
Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2021

I am pleased to present my sixth Treasurer's Report for the Friends of the ANBG Inc.

Once again the Friends' activities were hampered by Covid-19 restrictions but the dedication of our Special Interest Groups and volunteers meant that some events were still held generating welcome income and celebrating some milestones along the way.

It is almost 12 months since the Friends 30th Anniversary Garden Party was held on the lawns and 100 'ticketed' members were allowed to attend. With all the planned activities for our 30th anniversary in 2020 it was pleasing to see one major event come to fruition. Thank you to the volunteers who worked so tirelessly to make the party a great success for our members.

With the ongoing Covid restrictions, several of the Friends' normal annual events were either cancelled, postponed or were severely restricted such as the ever-popular Thursday Talks program, the Growing Friends public plant sales and the '*Meet and Greet*' of new members. Thursday Talks resumed on 18 February 2021 after almost 12 months in abeyance and in the 19 weeks to 30 June still managed to raise \$914 in donations from over 600 attendees all with strict limited seating capacity in the Theatre. Thank you to the perseverance of the Thursday Talk committee and their eminent presenters.

Speaking of perseverance, the Growing Friends managed to hold five internal sales of propagated plants all within their Covid-19 safety plan with pre-ordering and set time for contactless collection, the now familiar "click and collect" practice. Historically, the Growing Friends plant sales are one of our largest revenue raising events, if not the largest, and this year still managed to raise \$8,270 for the Friends. Thank you to Sue Waterworth who co-ordinates the sales along with a dedicated team, including Maurice Hermann the convenor of Growing Friends.

The Photographic Group's exhibition in November-December 2020 raised \$1,618 for the Friends with photographers exhibiting their work for sale.

The Botanic Art Group held two exhibitions during the financial year with total income raised for the Friends of \$8,196. Both the Photographic and Botanical Art exhibitions take many, many months to organise, assemble and present the works of art for sale. The Friends are fully appreciative of the group members and of those who volunteer daily at these exhibitions.

Booked Walks, co-ordinated by Pam Cooke (a Guide and part of the Membership team), was also impacted by the restrictions but still generated \$1,200 in income, slightly down on last year.

Page 2 of the Financial Statements (consolidated) details the different ways the Friends earn income. The sub-total of \$195,612 a minor increase on the previous year, needs to be tempered by the related expenses of \$147,187 on Page 3.

Also stated on page 2 is the Membership Fees which at \$101,440 not only exceeded expectation but broke the \$100,000 mark for the first time, (excluding 2015 when there was an accounting adjustment). Membership renewals remained strong, and this coupled with 341 new memberships resulted in a 7.5% increase in receipted fees over the previous year.

Thank you to all the members who renewed their membership and to all the people who became new members in the 12 months to 30 June 2021. With the uncertainty of Covid and people re-assessing their lifestyle, it is not surprising that people want to get out to enjoy nature and to appreciate the beautiful offerings of the Gardens.

All Friends' volunteers should be proud that their tireless efforts have been rewarded with over \$195,000 in income for the year. In the main, the income will be donated towards projects proposed by the Gardens. Thank you to the Friends' Project Committee for appraising these proposals and tabling them to both the Friends Council and the Public Fund committee for discussion and decision.

Donations to the Gardens for 8 varied projects plus donated artworks totalled \$67,486. It included the third and final payment towards the thermal tolerance project titled *Living on the edge: How do Australian plants cope with extreme temperatures* and the final payment towards the new Banksia Garden; such a popular part of the gardens to wander around.

The Friends and Public Fund have project commitments this coming financial year to 30 June 2022 of almost \$340,000; all projects are in progress. There is often a time lag from Friends Council and Public Fund management committee approving funds to projects, those projects then being completed, and donation support being called upon by the ANBG administration. It is certainly an exciting time with so many projects being managed by the ANBG administration with some participation from the Friends.

It was pleasing to donate to the Gardens some smaller, but very worthwhile items such as 26 new microscopes (\$10,225) for use by school children. Also 9 ChatterVoxes (\$4,500) wearable, portable voice amplifiers to be used during guided walks and an interactive smartboard (\$7,580) installed in the Celia Rosser room for use by special interest groups and educators.

There was also a donation of \$5,000 towards the editing of Don Beer's new book *Miracle on Black Mountain, A History of the Australian National Botanic Gardens* published for the 50th anniversary of the Garden's official opening.

The Friends Public Fund is a registered charity established in 2004 to receive tax deductible donations from members and others. This year the Public Fund issued tax deductible receipts for \$28,893 an increase of 11% over the previous year. Note that 225 donations were receipted being an increase of 28% on the previous year and its pleasing to see the awareness of the Public Fund broadening. During the year, the Public Fund made the final payment towards the interpretation signs in the Banksia Garden (\$8,611) and an international speaker for the Seed Science Conference (\$6,878). As mentioned above, the Public Fund has committed to other worthwhile projects but unfortunately the projects were not finalised in time for 30 June.

The consolidated Balance Sheet (page 4) for 30 June 2021 states total assets of \$462,749. It should be noted there is a significant commitment to the new East Core Precinct development on the lawns outside the Pollen Café and to an Online Education Resource with the aim "to engage with a broader audience of students and, for teachers to use in their classroom". Both the Friends' Council and the Public Fund are always willing to consider new project proposals.

There are two sets of Financial Statements. One set is the consolidated statements of the Friends accounts and includes the Public Fund's accounts and assets of \$111,525. There is also separate Financial Statements for the Public Fund to provide transparency for our deductible gift recipient status and to assist in the various regulatory annual returns. Council is confident that the accounts are in a robust financial position to continue our work, as per our Constitution, "*for the purpose of supporting the Gardens.*"

In conclusion, thank you to all the volunteers who work so tirelessly to generate income and profile the dedicated work of the Friends. Thanks also to the Garden management and staff who are very collegiate, Council members, Public Fund management committee and of course all the members of the Friends for their continuing support and renewal of membership.

Helen Elliot
Volunteer Treasurer